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With the spring upon which we depend at present held in reserve, there would be little doubt that a considerable surplus of available water would exist, even in years of low rainfall. Should this prove to be the case, plans would be instituted to cover the bare slopes immediately surrounding the Observatory with forest trees. An attempt to develop shade-trees in the early years of the Observatory failed because they could not be irrigated during the dry season. This question is of considerable importance from the scientific point of view. There is little doubt that our atmospheric conditions for observational work, already excellent, would be still better if shade-trees covered the ground. They would prevent the excessive heating in the daytime of the rock and soil surrounding the Observatory, and the consequent rapid radiation of heat in the evening.

It requires no argument to establish that our heterogeneous systems for supplying power and illumination should be replaced by a simple and central electric plant, operated by a gasoline engine. The officers of the General Electric Company have most generously examined into all the above-mentioned requirements and have drawn up plans to meet them, making no charge for the expert services of their engineers. The subject was brought to the attention of the University of California authorities, who petitioned the Governor and the Legislature of the State to make a special appropriation of ten thousand dollars for the expense of installation. This appropriation was generously made at the recent session and the construction will begin at once.

W. W. CAMPBELL.

March, 1905.

NOTE ON THE ORBIT OF COMET *e* 1904.

In an address on "The General Applicability of the Short Method of Determining Orbits from Three Observations," delivered before the Astrometry Section of the International Congress of Arts and Science at St. Louis in September of last year, a criterion was given which makes it possible to decide in the case of a newly discovered planet or comet the limits within which the elements may lie. Comet *e* 1904 (BORRELLY) having been found to be periodic by AITKEN and others from longer arcs, the criterion has been applied to the short arc of one-day intervals of the first three observations secured by Dr. AITKEN at Mt. Hamilton, in order to decide whether the period could be approximately determined from these first three observations, and it was found that the period in this case is indeterminate. A parabola will satisfy the first three observations, and a number of practical solutions exist. The indeterminateness is due to the nature of the problem, and not to the method used. A. O. LEUSCHNER.

BERKELEY ASTRONOMICAL DEPARTMENT.

LICK OBSERVATORY LECTURES BEFORE THE CLASS IN MODERN ASTRONOMY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

Director CAMPBELL has announced the following dates and subjects for the annual Lick Observatory lectures to be delivered this spring before the class in Modern Astronomy:—

By Director W. W. CAMPBELL:

1. Tuesday, March 21, 11 A.M.—"Current Eclipse Problems."
2. Saturday, March 25, 9 A.M.—"Current Eclipse Problems," continued.

By Astronomer W. J. HUSSEY:

3. Tuesday, March 28, 11 A.M.—"Present State of Double-Star Astronomy."
4. Thursday, March 30, 11 A.M.—"Concerning Nebulæ and Clusters."

By Assistant Astronomer C. D. PERRINE:

5. Tuesday, April 11, 11 A.M.—"The New Satellites of *Jupiter*."
6. Thursday, April 13, 11 A.M.—"The Solar Parallax from *Eros* Observations."

Dr. TOWNLEY, of the International Latitude Observatory at Ukiah, will follow with two lectures on "Variable Stars." The lectures will be delivered in the lecture-room of the Students' Observatory, and will be open to the public.

A. O. LEUSCHNER.

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